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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [CASC](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: PALESTINIAN KILLED AT WEST BANK
CHECKPOINT; 14 PALESTINIANS ARRESTED IN WEST BANK AND GAZA:
MAY 13-16, 2005 (1800 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint Embassy/ConGen cable.

11. (SBU) Summary: In the West Bank, the IDF on May 16 shot and killed a Palestinian as he approached an Israeli checkpoint on foot near Tulkarm. The IDF on May 15 shot and wounded two Palestinians who had thrown firebombs near 'Abud village, northwest of Ramallah. In the Gaza Strip, four Israeli civilians employed by the IDF and working on the fence along the Gaza-Egyptian border in Rafah suffered from shock and bruises on May 15 when Palestinian militants fired an anti-tank rocket towards an IDF tank stationed along the barrier. There were also reported instances of rocket, mortar, and exchanges of gunfire between the IDF and Palestinian militants, but no reported injuries. Some 5,000 Hamas supporters demonstrated May 13 in Jabaliya protesting the alleged desecration of a Koran at the U.S. detention center in Cuba. End summary.

West Bank

12. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death: A Palestinian woman on May 13 died during an IDF operation in the vicinity of her home in Hebron. The circumstances of the death are in dispute. Family members claim that she died when the IDF raided her home, but IDF sources claim that she died of a heart attack as they attempted to evacuate her.

-- Death: The IDF on May 16 shot and killed a Palestinian as he approached an Israeli checkpoint on foot near Tulkarm. According to Israeli security sources, the Palestinian pulled out a knife and attempted to stab one of the soldiers. Palestinian sources deny the Israeli version of events.

-- Injuries: The IDF on May 15 shot and wounded two Palestinians who had thrown firebombs near 'Abud village, northwest of Ramallah. Both Palestinians were taken to an Israeli hospital, where one of the injured Palestinians was reported to be in serious condition.

-- Protest/Injuries: Israeli and Palestinian activists on May 15 demonstrated against the construction of the separation barrier near Bil'in village, west of Ramallah. Several demonstrators suffered tear gas inhalation during the protest. (See &Arrests8.)

-- Shooting: An Israeli settler on May 14 fired at a Palestinian in the vicinity of settler agricultural fields near Salim village, east of Nablus. The settler claimed that the Palestinian, who managed to escape uninjured, had attempted to set fire to the agricultural fields.

-- Shooting: Unknown gunmen on May 15 fired shots at the main Palestinian Authority (PA) police station in Ramallah. There were no reported injuries from this incident. PA police are conducting an investigation, but suspect that the shooting may be related to a scuffle between PA police and wanted activists earlier that day.

13. (SBU) ARRESTS/SECURITY:

-- Arrests: The IDF on May 15 took into custody five Israeli and one foreign activist during demonstrations in protest of the construction of the separation barrier near Bil'in village, west of Ramallah. The IDF also arrested the coordinator of a Palestinian committee opposed to the construction of the barrier. (See &Protest/Injuries8.)

-- Incursion/Arrest: The IDF on May 15 entered the Askar refugee camp near Nablus and arrested two Fatah members.

-- Arrest: The IDF on May 15 arrested a Palestinian woman when she pulled out a knife near an IDF checkpoint in Hebron.

-- Arrest: The IDF on May 15 arrested a PFLP activist in Samu' village, south of Hebron, for reportedly planning to carry out a terrorist attack.

-- Incursion/Arrests: The IDF on May 15 entered Tubas village, northeast of Nablus, and arrested three Palestinians. The IDF also confiscated a makeshift rifle and ammunition.

-- Arrest: The IDF on May 15 arrested a Palestinian in Kafr Qaddum, west of Nablus, who was among the 500 prisoners released in February. The circumstances of the arrest are unknown.

-- Arrest: The IDF on May 15 arrested a Palestinian at the entrance of al-Khadr village, west of Bethlehem. The Palestinian was in possession of an explosive device at the time of the arrest.

-- Closure lifted: The IDF, with the exception of the Jenin and Nablus areas, on May 15 lifted the total closure on the West Bank that had been imposed in conjunction with Israeli Memorial and Independence Day celebrations.

-- Security: The IDF on May 13 set up flying checkpoints on the Wadi al-Bathan road, which links Nablus with the Jordan Valley.

14. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- PA President Abbas denied press reports, attributed to a senior Fatah official, of any plans to delay PLC elections scheduled for July.

Gaza

15. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injury: The IDF reported that the IDF shot and wounded a Palestinian May 15 during riots that broke out near the Israeli settlement of Neve Dekalim. UNRWA reported that the injured Palestinian was a 12-year-old boy who was shot while trying to raise a Palestinian flag over an IDF observation post.

-- Injuries: Israeli media and UNRWA reported that four Israeli civilians employed by the IDF and working on the fence along the Gaza-Egyptian border in Rafah suffered from shock and bruises May 15 when Palestinian militants fired an anti-tank rocket towards an IDF tank stationed along the barrier. The Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) took responsibility for the attack.

-- Mortars/Rockets: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants fired two mortar shells at Netzer Hazani May 14, and two more at Neve Dekalim May 15.

-- Mortars/Rockets: UNRWA reported that Palestinians fired three mortar shells into the western Negev overnight May 15-16 from the area around the Sufa Crossing.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported that Palestinians and IDF soldiers exchanged fire near Rafiah Yam May 15 and again May 16 west of Khan Yunis. Two more exchanges of fire occurred May 14, one near Rafah and the other near Neve Dekalim. IDF soldiers and Palestinians also exchanged fire May 13 near Neve Dekalim.

-- Explosions: UNRWA reported that IDF soldiers discovered and destroyed a tunnel near the border fence with Egypt opposite Bloc J of the Rafah refugee camp.

16. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- The IDF reported that IDF soldiers arrested three unarmed Palestinians May 15 as the three attempted to infiltrate into Israel across the barrier fence.

-- UNRWA reported that two Palestinians were arrested May 14 trying to cross into Israel illegally.

17. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open May 14-16, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction.

-- Erez Crossing was closed May 14, but re-opened for Palestinians May 15. A total of 3,770 laborers and 60 merchants crossed into Israel.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was closed May 14-15.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers May 14-16, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction May 15-16.

-- Karni Terminal was open May 14-16.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for arrivals and departures May 14-16.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed May 14-16. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi, except males aged 16-30.

18. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- UNRWA and media reported that demonstrations took place throughout the Gaza Strip May 15 to commemorate the 57th anniversary of al-Nakba, or the Catastrophe, as Palestinians term the establishment of the state of Israel. Rallies also took place in the West Bank. Approximately 4,000 people participated in the demonstration in Gaza City, according to UNRWA.

-- UNRWA reported that some 5,000 Hamas supporters demonstrated May 13 in Jabaliya protesting the alleged desecration of a Koran at the U.S. detention center in Cuba. Israeli and American flags were burned, according to UNRWA reports.
Pearce